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ABSTRACT

Representatives of migrant worker projects in the West and Southwest met to discuss past projects, future trends, critical issues, and program techniques. Eight speeches were delivered, and discussion groups considered issues of basic importance in program administration and program development. Some problems of the migrants were identified in the areas of education, vocational training, and the development of community and agricultural labor resources. Suggested solutions to these problems were described. Nine resolutions for the improvement of migrant worker projects were presented. (PS)

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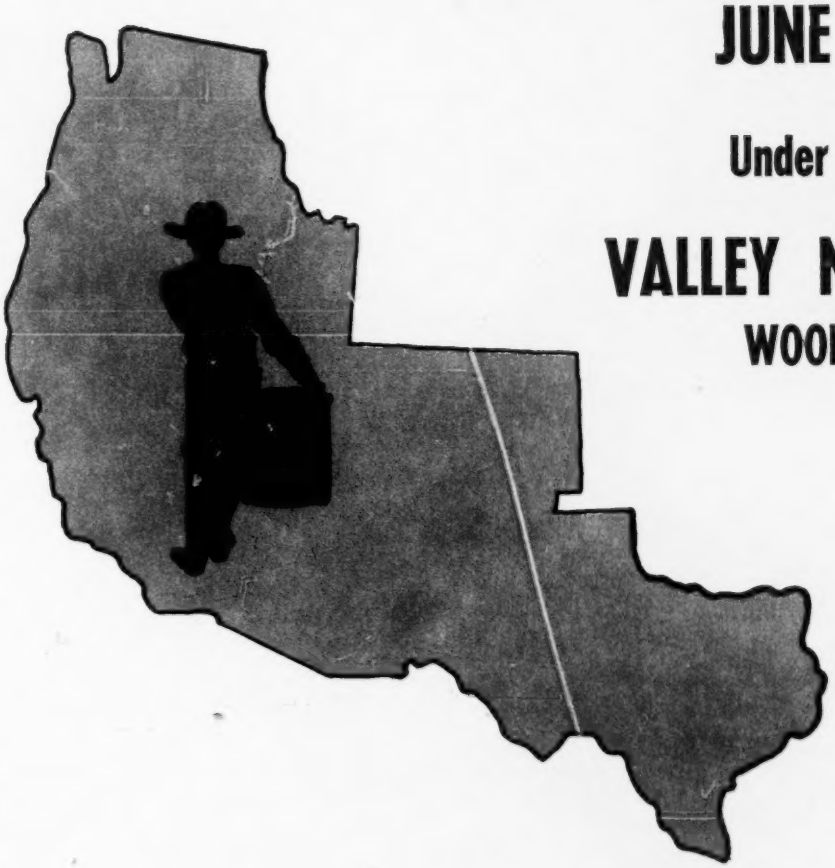
First Western Region Conference

of

OEO Migrant Projects



JUNE 7-9, 1967

Under The Auspices Of

VALLEY MIGRANT LEAGUE

WOODBURN, OREGON

RC 001 650

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Western Migrant Project Conference

June 7-9, 1967 Woodburn, Oregon

INTRODUCTION

This conference, consisting of representatives of migrant projects throughout the West and Southwest, was called by the Office of Economic Opportunity to provide a platform for the discussion of past programs and future trends in program planning, identification of critical issues and the development of program techniques. It was hoped that a useful dialogue could be established between administrative officials, project managers, and "grass roots" people who have been personally involved in migrant and seasonal farm worker programs.

The sharing of experiences and exchange of ideas with representatives from other Federal, State and local agencies is intended to create a climate of closer cooperation in addressing ourselves to the special problems of migrant and seasonal farm workers.

The Pattern Of Migrancy

RALPH H. CAKE Jr.

Farm labor migrancy is a trap which locks hundreds of thousands of Americans in a seemingly endless pattern of toil, transiency, insecurity, and poverty. Entry into the migrant stream, easily gained, seems to guarantee "no exit" for succeeding generations of children, as equally endowed as their fellow Americans with intelligence and energy, but seemingly lost to equal fulfillment of themselves in adulthood. While other Americans enjoy the fruits of the farm workers' toil, spending less of their income dollar for their abundant food than the citizens of any other country in the world, the migrants remain unable to afford to buy in the marketplace the very products they have brought forth from the fields. The American farm labor migrant by every form of economic measure is our most forgotten, ignored and destitute citizen. We pay every attention to the endless problems of the American farmer, worry over his cost-price squeeze, subsidize him, give him technical assistance through government-sponsored research and county extension programs, yet with clear consciences neglect and ignore the migrant laborer. Technological change in agriculture, which threatens the very existence of the farm worker on the mechanized and automated farm of the near future, forces upon us bold new thinking in order to avoid social disaster for today's farm workers tomorrow.

The basic symptom of the farm workers' problems is economic: as the lowest-paid worker in America, he is unable to support a family with dignity on the low wages and seasonality of farm labor jobs. As a consequence large families seem to be an economic asset if the children can work in the fields along with the parents. These children become the old-age insurance of the parents, who normally fail to qualify for old age benefits such as Social Security. But working children cannot go to school; instead they drop out when able-bodied to help supplement the family income. At this point the trap closes, as uneducated youths find themselves unfit to command even the entry-level jobs in our increasingly technological society. Migrants, as other untrained marginal people, then become easy targets for exploitation by others, who find quick and easy profit in the misfortunes of others. Recruiters and labor contractors gain by becoming the indispensable middle men between poor and "ignorant" workers, who often speak no English, and the agribusinessmen who often cannot be bothered to accept their responsibilities in employee relations. The migrant is forced to accept hazardous and unfit transportation provided by contractors from home base areas in the south to the flash peak crop areas of the north. Those workers with their own automobiles are often forced to live in sub-standard and unsanitary housing provided by growers, contractors, or penny-pinching housing authorities. Many migrant families, stranded by vehicle break-down in out-of-the-way villages en route to the harvests, pay exorbitant repair bills to local garagemen, often by mortgaging their summer's earnings through a telegraphed loan from a friendly grower or contractor. Often lured to the harvest area by the false promises of unscrupulous contractors or jittery farmers days or even weeks before the work begins, migrant families buy groceries at the only place open to their need, the small, expensive, credit-granting corner or cossroads grocer. Profits needed to move to the next crop harvest are eaten up in paying for these pre-season grocery bills incurred while the workers idled away days waiting for work to begin.

Ill health remains probably the greatest fear of the migrant worker and his family. Often forced to live in unbelievably crowded and unsanitary conditions, dysentary, infant diarrhea, infectious hepatitis, influenza, and other diseases take their toll of families dependent upon strength and stamina for their very existence. Local health authorities are often shocked to find such "exotic" diseases as diphtheria and typhoid endemic in migrant populations. Insecticides, herbicides, and other chemicals working wonders for growers are presenting new occupational hazards to farm workers, few of whom can afford modern health insurance plans. Adequate low-cost medical facilities available to migrants in rural areas are pitifully scarce, as local medical societies gear up their private war against "socialized medicine."

Increasing numbers of migrants have chosen a new way to end their cycle of hopelessness by trying to settle down in the higher-wage areas of the Pacific Northwest, California, the Midwest, and the Northeast. But the cards are stacked against them. Res-

idency laws deny them emergency assistance available to "residents" under public assistance laws. Unemployment compensation, granted to other seasonal workers such as loggers, is almost universally denied farm workers, who are not granted the pleasure of standing in line for their weekly "rocking chair pay." Although declared a "hazardous occupation" by state workmen's compensation commissions and insurance company actuaries, agriculture and its farm workers are denied the benefits of compulsory industrial accident insurance coverage. In an age reaping the benefits of unionization and collective bargaining, America's farm workers are denied coverage under federal and state labor relations laws. In farm labor relations unilateralism still applies. Farm workers who choose to settle down in higher-wage areas of the north and west usually must live in substandard housing, while rural area governmental bodies close their eyes to the desperate need for subsidized low-rent, year-round housing. Indeed many public bodies force the eviction of "transients" from such public housing as exists in their areas when the farm workers are no longer needed by the tax-paying growers. "Nice" towns don't want their images tarnished by America's forgotten folk.

Recently, under programs launched under the war on poverty, some beginning has been made in facing the problems of the farm laborer and creating programs to begin to end his suffering. What are some of these programs and what opportunities do they offer?

SOME PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

1. *Education:* The educational problems of migrant children are closely related to the lives their families are forced to live. Transiency results in low school attendance from time lost in transit between crop areas. In some cases a child will attend over forty different schools in order to finish the eighth grade. Most migrant children are therefore educationally retarded at least two or three years behind their peers. A seventeen-year-old seventh or eighth-grader is sorely tempted to drop out of school—and usually does. Even the brightest students, faced with a succession of differently-administered rural schools and different classmates, would find adjustment to school difficult. Rural school districts in areas of spring and fall farm labor peaks often find school enrollments doubled during these seasons, sorely taxing local facilities and budgets.

Solution: Some migrant programs have established supplemental educational programs to augment regular school facilities during peak periods. Extra teachers are hired, and new classroom space is found in churches or by using abandoned space or doubling up of school shifts. But since OEO funds are short, and education of children is considered primarily a local responsibility, such programs under OEO sponsorship have been reduced. The same fate has befallen the special summer schools for migrants previously funded by OEO. States and local school districts have been urged to take on this added educational responsibility, but the response of local educators has often failed to meet the need.

The educational problems of farm worker adults reflect their lives as children of farm workers, but in order to qualify for entry-level non-farm jobs, these adults must also be given the opportunity to complete basic and G.E.D. equivalency education. However, for many farm worker adults an entry level of third or fourth grade into adult basic education classes presents a seemingly unsurmountable barrier. In addition the transiency of migrant adults makes long-term enrollment and study impossible unless they decide to settle down in one home base area. Nevertheless some migrant programs have developed short-term basic and G.E.D. preparation classes for migrants in camps or in schools where they can have short-term experience with their fellows in academic education. Two to eight-week courses are designed to give immediate rewards to the adult students, but long range benefits other than conditioning for later study in a home base area have not been demonstrated. Classes in spoken English as a second language for migrants who do not speak English, using materials developed by program staff especially for migrants, have probably been the most successful. Further work is needed in developing "practical skills" classes of short duration aimed principally at migrants, to teach them about such everyday matters as buying a car, legal rights and obligations, and local services available to them.

Migrant programs have had more success in developing education programs for ex-migrants who have chosen to settle down in home base areas. Given a longer period of exposure to more intensive classes in basic education, G.E.D. preparation, and spoken

English as a second language, these resident farm worker adults have shown an enthusiasm to learn and a diligence to work which have resulted in surprising achievement. Night classes have worked, but "winter-day schools" lasting five or more hours a day during the off-season in field work have been much more successful. Family support in the form of stipends paid while a student attends classes have made it possible for first-year settlers to support themselves while upgrading their education. Where the wife as well as the husband attends classes, supportive child care services have helped attendance. Continuing these stipend programs throughout the year, so that the farm worker student can complete his basic education and G.E.D. preparation training without interruption, is thought to be essential for achieving quick and lasting results. The attainment of a high school diploma is almost mandatory for entry into prevocational or vocational training which would be of any benefit in helping a farm worker train himself for a non-farm job.

2. *Vocational Preparation:* Every available piece of evidence concerning the future of farm labor in America demonstrates that modern technology is rapidly overtaking the need for hand labor on America's farms, and that a few years hence most tasks now performed by migrant and seasonal farm workers will be performed by machines. Herbicides have already reduced the need for pre-harvest weeding, new monogerm seeds have eliminated the need for thinning, and a variety of harvesters can efficiently harvest crops such as tomatoes and berries, where such innovation was thought impossible only a few years ago. Agronomists now develop species of plants especially suited to the new mechanical means of harvesting. The only question subject to debate is when—when will the farm worker as we know him today be obsolescent? To meet this challenge and to avoid social disaster for hundreds of thousands of undereducated, untrained farm workers who will be deprived by technology of their meager livelihoods, what programs and solutions have been tried by OEO-financed migrant programs?

Solution: Basic education and G.E.D. preparation programs can only prepare a farm worker for further vocational training. Migrant programs have tried many approaches to vocational preparation. Some have developed pre-vocational programs such as basic short-term courses in welding, enabling some farm workers to get entry-level jobs in welding at higher wages with the hopes of getting on-the-job experience and training which will increase their employability as tradesmen and give them some opportunity for seniority and greater job security. Another approach has been through tuition grants to farm workers to attend existing vocational education institutions, supported by stipend payments for family support during training. Vocational training facilities are so expensive to create, because of the need for costly shop and instruction equipment, that special vocational training facilities for farm workers have been considered unfeasible. Migrant programs have provided in-service training positions for ex-migrant adults, who work as program and clerical aides and in administrative positions suited to their training abilities. Some migrant programs have developed on-the-job training programs in which farm workers receive vital training and experience while receiving training pay from the employer, who receives funds to provide the training for the trainee.

A new program will provide basic training in migrant project agencies for ex-migrant "Career Trainees," who are then assigned part-time to a local agency such as a health department, which agrees to provide in-service training for the trainee and also agrees to hire the trainee in a permanent position with the agency if the trainee's progress is satisfactory. This program is intended to open up new career openings for non-professional, low-income people in public agencies. It is hoped to be able to extend this program to private industry, where possibility for upward mobility for the trainee might be greater. Other migrant projects have developed job counseling and placement services for farm workers, offering in-depth testing and counseling of the applicant, and placement in year-round jobs suited to his needs. More emphasis needs to be placed on involving the total family of the farm worker applicant in the job counseling process. In conjunction with these programs, migrant project staffs have launched job development programs designed to sell employees on accepting ex-migrant workers as full-time workers, often requiring a realistic evaluation of entry-level job qualifications. New and expanded programs need to be developed to accelerate the vocational preparation of ex-migrants for non-farm jobs if we are to avoid the chronic social problems of the near future.

3. *Development of community and farm worker resources:* Migrant and resident farm

workers, as the forgotten americans, are shunned by the communities in which they work and live, and are ignored by Congress, state legislatures and local governmental bodies at all levels. Most citizens of communities which play host each year to thousands of workers, as the forgotten Americans, are shunned by the communities in which they work migrants or which provide the home base for hundreds of resident farm worker families, are either totally ignorant of the existence of these neglected neighbors or choose to ignore their presence. Old line agency bureaucrats and social workers are either uninterested in the distressing problems of these 'transients," or feel their hands tied by restrictive social legislation, red tape, or vastly underfunded budgets. Residency requirements of many social programs in no way fit the interstate nature of migrancy as a way of life for thousands of families. While grower opinion is amply represented in the halls of Congress, state legislatures, and local governments by some of the best-organized lobbies and power groups in the country, seasonal farm workers remain almost totally unorganized and voiceless. National and local politicans can well afford to ignore the puny voice of the migrant.

Compounding this problem of anonymity and powerlessness of the farm worker is his own lack of unity and sense of organization. Farm workers usually represent ethnic or cultural minority groups which appear resigned to a life of exclusion from the main stream of American society. An ill-defined "culture of migrancy" separates them further from their brethren. The very life of the migrant and seasonal farm worker would seem to preclude any effective political power or involvement in affairs of state. Likewise the few "do-gooders" from the local power structure who dare to espouse the cause of the farm worker are largely church or social worker types whose voices are mainly ignored by Main Street businessmen or courthouse politicians.

Yet even our most inauspicious rural communities oftentimes possess abundant local resources in both trained manpower and physical and material aspects which could, if catalyzed into effort, be brought to bear on solving the multiple problems of today's farm worker. Local classrooms lie empty many hours of the day, and bored rural towns-

men wonder, "What can we do?" How can these untapped community resources be used in our war against farm worker poverty?

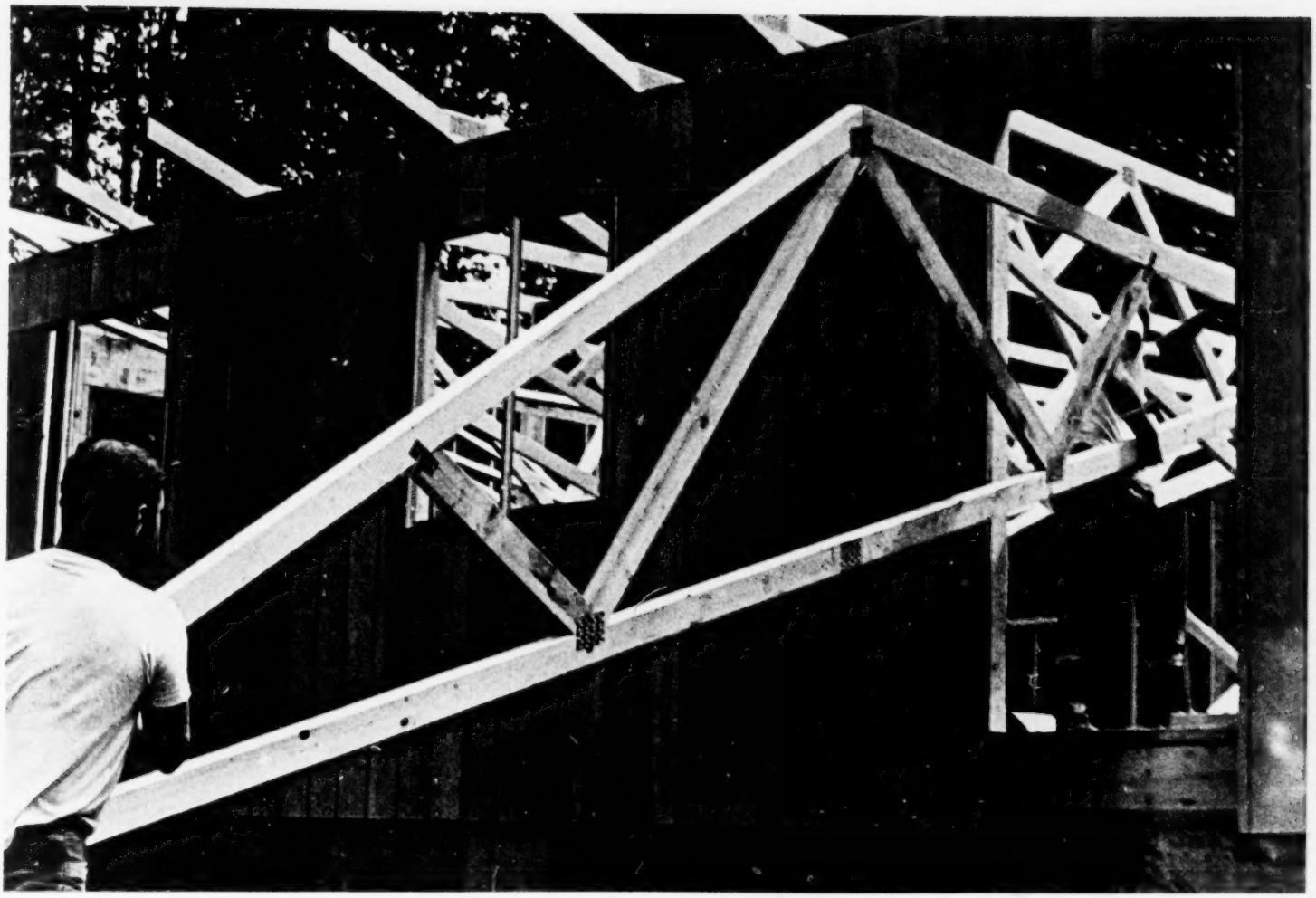
Solution: Some migrant projects have developed multiple-purpose "opportunity centers" for a community-wide attack on the problems of farm worker poverty. The staff of these centers is a mixture of professional workers, such as educators, job counselors, and community development agents, and non-professionals from the ex-migrant group. The centers provide a home base for the adult education, job development, counseling, and placement programs, but also provide many additional services to farm workers. The most successful centers involve the farm worker recipients as completely as possible in the center operation: as paid staff members, as members of policy-making boards, as teacher's aides, and in a variety of other ways. A large part of the function of the migrant opportunity center staff is to unlock other resources in the community by example, by persuasion, by winning allies in the cause of farm worker poverty. The community power structure is involved in the program in every possible way, so that it may grow to recognize the problem and begin to take on its proper responsibility in beginning to find solutions fitting the local resources and temperament. Involvement of the community means hours of effort, frustrating controversy, and frequent setbacks, but the ultimate goal, takeover of the programs by the community itself, is worth the effort.

In some rural areas migrant opportunity centers have developed auxiliary organizations of power structure groups which provide many welfare-type services to destitute migrant families. Clothes, household furnishings, and emergency food is collected for donation to stranded families and to help migrants who are settling down in the community for the first time. These organizations sometimes find full-time employment for settling families, pay the first month's rent on the house, and provide much-needed friendship and companionability. Such person-to-person involvement sometimes leads to involvement in programs of greater impact on the problem, as community drives for better welfare services.

Migrant opportunity centers also try to develop self-help organizations of farm workers, giving them practical experience in problem-solving of issues felt deeply by the farm workers themselves. These farm worker organizations are laboratories and training grounds for the development of responsible, imaginative, and fearless farm worker leaders, who will be able to lead their friends and neighbors into greater participation in the life of the community. For it is the farm workers themselves who must ultimately force the solution of their present and future problems through responsible collective action.

Conclusion: The programs and approaches herein outlined are only some of the solutions to the problems of farm workers presently being tried by OEO-funded migrant projects. But in order to make any real impact on a problem so immense and complex, new ideas and new approaches need to be tried. To do this, the consensus of the Western Migrant Conference reported herein was overwhelmingly that much more of our national wealth will have to be enlisted in this crucial battle to head off further waste of human resources and social disaster.

Action that can be taken and has been taken to alleviate the condition of the seasonal farm worker and improve his chances of escaping the migratory trap is illustrated in these reprints of articles and pictures. They originally appeared in small newspapers for farm workers that have been concerned with the plight of the migrant, but which have also sought to portray his progress as well as his problems.



New Homes For Farm Workers

"The walls are up — the roof is half finished— we'll be in our new house in a few weeks." Jean O'Neil smiles, thinking of a dream nearly come true.

The O'Neils were migrant workers, now they are settled, and moving soon to a home of their own. The hope of a new home began last January when a group of settled farm workers met at the Opportunity Center to see if they could qualify for Farmer's Home Administration loans.

FHA loans money to low income families to build new homes or to buy and remodel older homes, such as the one a family is already renting.

Three farm working families in Sandy then applied for loans to build their own homes. The Wesley Bond, the Bob O'Neil and the Albert Bash families each have been loaned $8400. They are building small three bedroom houses on one acre of land. Each family will pay $53.00 a month for ten months of the year. The FHA loan is for 33 years at 5 per cent interest. In addition each family will put aside $20.00 each month to cover the cost of fire insurance and taxes.

Said Bob O'Neil, "We've had to live in lots of places. Now at last we are moving to a new home of our own."

Adult Student

David Roebuck is a hard working student. He's learning to read and write in one of our Basic Education classes.

"I've gained two years of school in three months," said David. Before the classes David worked in lumber mills and in the fields. He found no future in that work. The mills are shutting down and the machines are coming to the fields.

"If some of us," said David, "don't look for a better future, what is going to happen to us, to our families?"

"Some of my friends don't like the idea of my going back to school. They know I've always been able to get by. Some of my friends haven't given much thought to the future."

For seven years David worked in a mill. He knew the work very well, but he was never made foreman. "They always passed over me," said David, "Each time they'd ask me to break in a new foreman. It was my lack of education that kicked me down."

"Now in class our teacher, Sheila Babb, really encourages us. We ask questions until we understand. We are not embarrassed."

"If I had only known school could be like this," said David, "I would have tried it before."

I Want A Better Life For My Children

"I have eight children, it is for them that I want to learn English."

Maria Hernandez spoke softly, there was determination in her voice. "I do not want my children to suffer like I have, working day and night in the fields."

With English, Maria hopes to get into nurses training.

"I am used to working hard."

"We have decided to settle. My husband has gone back to Texas. English will mean the chance for a better job to support my children."

I Was A Migrant . . . Not Any More

Oralia Vasquez, better known as "Ya Ya", recently left the migrant stream to work as a nurses' aide at the Newberg Care Home.

The pretty 21-year-old said she wanted something "better." "It was a decision I have wanted to make for a long time," she said. "And now, it's hard to believe that I can stay here. I moved around all my life—you get used to moving, but you get tired of it. And it's so great to be able to spend my money on what I want, and not have to save it for the trip back."

Ya Ya went to the Opportunity Center and spoke with John Smith, Job Counsellor. She was sent on an interview a week later to the Newberg Care Home and was hired to begin work the next day.

After only two weeks of work, her employer is convinced that Ya Ya will work out fine. "We are very pleased with Oralia. She does her work well, and we want to keep her. The patients are happy with her, too." At the close of the conversation, Burke said he would pay Ya Ya's way to LPN training school for a year if she wants to go.

It is possible for a migrant to leave the stream, and as Oralia put it, "Any migrant can do it, if he really wants to."

Zapata Is Out Of Poverty, But Where Will He Live?

Does a person benefit from "getting out of poverty" even though it often gets him into another problem that has no solution?

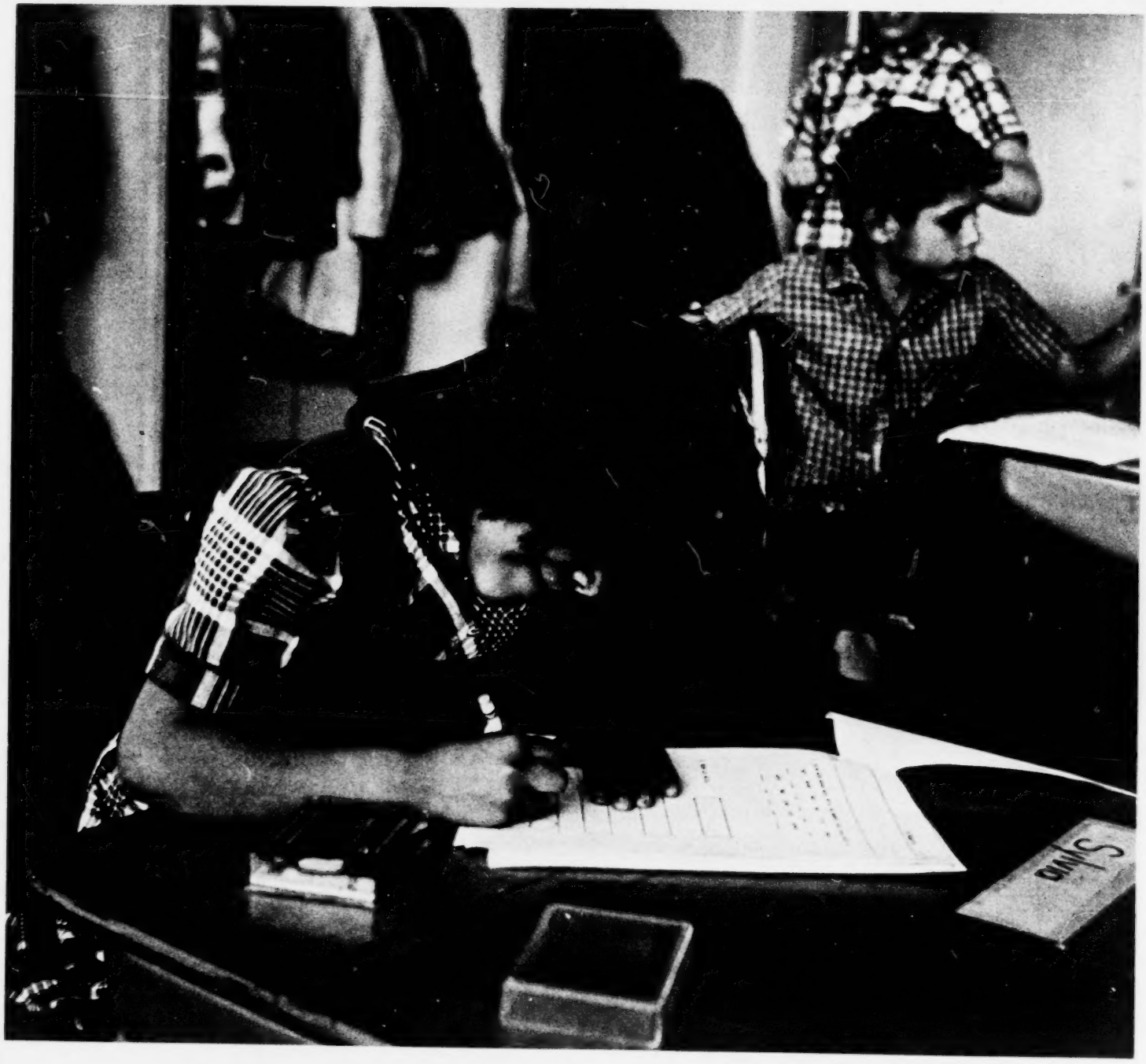
Here is the story of Gilberto Zapata, his wife and six children:

Mr. Zapata, an ex-migrant, recently graduated from the welding classes held at tech school. He now has a job in Portland and is making good money . . . But the Zapatas are less worried about money now. They are faced with another problem — decent housing. Because he left seasonal farm work, Mr. Zapata cannot live in the house he had lived in before, as it belongs to the grower, and the grower needs the house for his employees.

"What am I supposed to do?" says Mr. Zapata. "My family and friends live in this community and I work in the city 50 miles away. I like my job but I also care for my family and I want to live in this community. Where am I suposed to live? There is no housing available."

Mr. Zapata has done well in both his job and in the community. He is president of the Spanish-American Organization here and has a lot to leave behind if he is forced to move to the big city.

We hope there will be another chapter to add to this story soon: the news that Mr. Zapata and his family have been able to find a suitable house in their own community.



Migrant Children Attend School

There are many children who travel from Texas north in the early spring. The children come with their parents to work in the fields. Each child is taken out of school in Texas to make the trip.

This year, many families living in "Flavorland" camp were anxious to see their children enter school to finish out the school year. The children were glad to return to the classroom. They would have time to catch up on their studies before going to work this summer. These children know that a month missed from school is not easy to make up.

There are 23 children from the 15 families now in "Flavorland" camp who are attending school daily. The School District has cooperated in placing each child in a suitable classroom.

It is not easy for parents to take their children out of school in Texas to come here—but the harvest trip is necessary. It is good to know that each child will be placed in school as soon as he arrives. Both parents and children agree—time lost out of school is a hardship for all.

Parents who plan a better future for their children encourage their children to attend school whenever possible.

Benefits From Day Care Cannot Be Measured

No one can actually measure the results that come from the child care and summer school programs. The observer is invited to do his own guessing.

Trini misses two months of school and never catches up. Johnny gets help from summer school and passes his grade. The future will tell the difference.

And what of the child age three who sits in a car all day or along the edge of a field while his parents work in the field? Another child, the same age, is taken to a day care center where he has attention, interesting toys, sanitary facilities, attractive surroundings, and affectionate supervision. It is not unlikely that the latter child, throughout his school life and beyond, will possess some unseen values and attitudes that could not have come to him had he spent the summer imprisoned in a car.

'War On Poverty' Explained To The Public

A meeting was held recently at the Opportunity Center to explain and discuss the War on Poverty. A representative from the Community Action Program (CAP) and the local Migrant project was present to explain the purpose and function of each program. The meeting was open to the public.

New Club: 'Los Amigos'

In our town there is a new club with a friendly name—"Los Amigos." It began three weeks ago when a group of people met at the home of Enrique Gonzalez. They discussed the new problems they face. They are no longer migrants, they are now settled. They met again, the following week, and the club was born. Later they held their first social event, a dance at the armory. "Los Olympicos" furnished the music.

The club is open to anyone who is interested in helping families leave the migrant stream. Officers are Eddie Lopez, president, and Margarito "Moggie" Trevino, vice president.

The Workers Always Take Care Of My Camp

Virgil Kubin, a cherry grower, has been in the valley area for nearly 10 years.

Mr. Kubin has been working hard all winter to make his camp more comfortable for his pickers in the summer.

"My pickers work hard for me," said Kubin, "So I don't mind working hard for them."

Mr. Kubin has added four new cabins and a new bath house to his camp. All of his 18 cabins have lights, heat, a stove, and a refrigerator. He furnishes everything.

Near the camp is a large dormitory with shower and facilities which houses 25 men.

"I house about 60 people every summer," he said, "And I have NEVER had to worry about damage to my place. I respect my workers, and in turn they respect me and my property. I feel if you are good to them — they will be good to you."

Mr. Kubin thinks a lot of his workers. "I have tried to use local people to harvest my crops. I have even trained them, but they will never be as good as the seasonal people. These laborers are not afraid to work and they do a darn good job for me."

Western Migrant Project Conference Agenda

June 7-9, 1967

June 7

12:00 noon Lunch

11:30 a.m. Reception and Registration
Purpose and outline, Bob Wynia, Ass't Exec. Director
½ day tour of area centers, classes, etc.

6:00 p.m. Dinner Meeting:
1. Welcome from VML Director John Little
2. Keynote Address
Arthur Fleming, President, University of Oregon

June 8

9:00 a.m. The Migrant Amendment — Title I
Speaker: Clifford Norris, Oregon State Department of Education
Open Forum — Question period

9:50 a.m. Coffee Break

10:00 a.m. The California Experience in Migrant Programs
Speaker: Mr. Robert Walter, Deputy Director, California Office OEO
Open Forum — Question period

11:00 a.m. Psychology of the Poor
Speaker: Dr. Arthur Pearl, Director, Upward Bound, Eugene, Oregon

12:15 p.m. Lunch

Agenda (continued)

June 8

1:00 p.m. Migrant Programs of the Southwest

Speakers: Lauro Garcia, Director; Arizona Project; Alex Mercure, Director, New Mexico Project

Discussion

2:45 p.m. Coffee Break

3:00 p.m. Discussion (Group breaks into two sections)

1. Administration

Suggested Topic

A. Building a constructive board-staff relationship

II. Program Development

What constitutes optimum participation of the poor.

6:00 p.m. Dinner

The Outlook for Migrant Projects, Office of Economic Opportunity, Norm DeWeaver.

June 9

9:00 a.m. The Role of E.P.I in Migrant Programs

Speaker: Peter Scarth, Director, Educational Projects Inc.

10:00 a.m. Coffee Break

10:10 a.m. Reporting of Individual Groups

1. Consideration of new ideas
2. Basic resolutions — Future planning

12:00 noon Dismissal

NOTE: Not all of the addresses of speakers featured on the agenda are reproduced in this report due to space and budget limitations. Copies of these addresses may be obtained by writing to Valley Migrant League, Box 128, Woodburn, Oregon.

Welcoming Address

By JOHN LITTLE, Executive Director, Valley Migrant League

In welcoming the delegates to the first regional OEO Migrant Conference the following questions were posed as ideas to be examined by the conference.

1. Are our programs as well organized as they could possibly be? Have we selected the best staff? Have we developed a creative program? Do we have an accurate and efficient system of gathering and recording data and information about what we are doing? Is there a meaningful participation of farm workers on the Board of Directors and on the staff?

2. Do we have a truly creative adult education program? Is this program creative in terms of curriculum development, motivating people to want an education because they see a value in it?

An example was cited of the Valley Migrant League's achievement of over 200 GED high school diplomas with an approximate increase in lifetime earning power of $10 million. Have these GED graduates been shown how to use this diploma in forging their way into society and getting the jobs they aspire to?

Is one year really long enough to work with a seasonal farm worker who has an average 5th grade entry level and aspires to a 12th grade graduation and then on to vocational training?

3. In vocational training the Valley Migrant League has helped approximately 250 people to increase their earning capacity from an average of 90 cents an hour for six months of the year to a $1.80 per hour for twelve months of the year.

This is a tremendous accomplishment in terms of what it was, but is not a great accomplishment in terms of what could be. Can each individual be trained and effectively placed in the best possible job in one year? Two years? Or even three years? Are we training people for jobs which are already obsolete or do they have a future? Are we taking people from dead-end agricultural jobs and placing them in dead-end industrial jobs? Are we proposing creative cooperation with existing local, state, and federal training and placement agencies so that they may address themselves with our assistance to the very special problems of farm workers in our state?

4. What have we done to apprise the volunteer local community forces, not only of the situation of the farm worker, but in extending a real invitation to them to share in the responsibility of assisting seasonal farm workers to become full-fledged members of our local society in every way? And what, we ought to ask ourselves, are we doing to exchange ideas? Hopefully, this will be the beginning of something that would blossom into an exchange that would assist us in avoiding duplication of efforts and experiments. It will assist us in coordinating wherever possible our work with the migrants.

Summary of an Address By Dr. Arthur Flemming

President, University of Oregon

THE OUTOOK FOR MIGRANT PROGRAMS

I am very happy to have the opportunity to meet with a group of people who are involved on a day to day basis in carrying forward what I think to be one of the most exciting programs that our country has undertaken. I would like to say, I guess by way of qualifying myself a little bit more as a witness here tonight, that the university that I have the privilege of being associated with is rather heavily involved in the programs of the Office of Economic Opportunity.

I'm delighted that President Johnson had the vision and the courage to present the programs of the Economic Opportunity Act to the Congress of the United States and I'm delighted that the leaders in Congress recognized the validity of the approach that he was taking and enacted the Economic Opportunity Act. I think it is good legislation. In addition to this I'm a great admirer of the experimental and innovative programs that have been developed by those who joined Sergeant Shriver as members of the staff of the Office of Economic Opportunity. As a member of the Civil Service Commission for nine years I saw new agencies come into being. I know some of the problems that were involved in bringing new agencies into being. I know some of the problems that are involved, for example, in recruiting qualified persons who are willing to come in and dedicate a portion of their lives to a situation that is essentially insecure. You can't make a career out of being associated with new agencies and with agencies that people have identified as being temporary. It calls for a kind of vision, a kind of dedication that you don't find in too many persons. But I feel that Mr. Shriver and those associated with him did an excellent job of bringing together in the office of Economic Opportunity, men and women who saw the vision back of this legislation, and who are willing to dedicate a portion of their lives to trying to translate that vision into a living reality.

I feel that our nation is deeply indebted to Mr. Shriver and those associated with him for their willingness to come in to the Office of Economic Opportunity and do a pioneering job with all of the difficulties and with all of the problems that are inherent in a pioneering job.

We've reached the point now where some programs which have been started by the Office of Economic Opportunity are identified generally as successful programs. Take a program like Head Start. I know that there is a debate about Head Start within educational circles and yet on the whole there is general acceptance of the fact that this has been a successful program. There were those who were very critical because it didn't provide for the right kind of follow-through or follow-up. But as a result we've now got a Head Start follow-through program. On the whole the reports are encouraging. There isn't any question at all that there is a group of young men and young women in our colleges and universities today who, in all probability when they complete their work in a satisfactory manner, just wouldn't be in these colleges and universities if it were not for Upward Bound. There isn't any doubt in my mind but that number is going to increase substantially as the people who have participated in Upward Bound programs in the tenth and eleventh grade complete their high school work and have the opportunity of moving into our colleges and universities to achieve their highest potential.

Job Corps programs are more controversial, yet step by step are finding their way to the place where they are operating on a pretty solid foundation. Again I say to you it's too bad we have to really go back and relive the CCC experiences and make discoveries again that were made back in the days of the CCC. But nevertheless it seem to me this program is moving forward.

The Community Action Programs, of course, have had a pretty rugged time in some communities, but in other communities they moved forward in a significant way. But surely we couldn't expect anything else to happen in view of all of the new relationships that were being established and are being established through the Community Action Program.

As far as the Migrant Program is concerned there are a good many experts in the room. You are here for the purpose of evaluating your progress, you are here for the purpose of identifying the things that need to be done in order to make it possible for you to do a more effective job. All I can say is, I'm delighted that the Migrant Farm Labor program is a part of the Office of Economic Opportunity.

Now we've reached the point where the programs have been operating long enough so that we have a fair number of Monday quarterbacks scattered throughout the nation. They are convinced as they look back on what some people have been doing over the period of the last 18 months or two years that they could have done a much better job or that a much better job could be done if you just lifted out some of these programs instead of keeping them in the Office of Economic Opportunity and put them over in old line department and agencies. In other words there's a real drive on at the present time to dismember the Office of Economic Opportunity.

I just simply want to say that in my judgment if that drive succeeds, it will be a sad day for our nation, because I have no doubt in my mind at all but that the Office of Economic Opportunity should remain intact for the next few years if we are going to get the maximum innovation and experimentation in the areas in which all of us are interested. I believe we need an agency in the Federal Government which has as its only concern providing new opportunity for those who can be appropriately classified as being among the poor.

If we are going to have innovation and experimentation in the Federal Government, every now and then we need to bring into existence a new agency or some new agencies. Because within the old line department and agencies people become involved in the programs in which they believe. They're very sincere about it and you wouldn't want them in those programs unless they did feel that way about it. And they're never quite satisfied with the resources made available to them for carrying on these programs, and that's the way it should be also. They shouldn't be satisfied; they've got a high standard of performance in mind. And they want to achieve that high standard of performance. The minute someone within the old line agency suggests a brand new program, then the persons who had been dedicating their lives to the older program see that brand new program as a competitor for funds. They see it as a threat to the achievement of the aspirations that they have in mind. And consequently, they don't give that new idea, new plan, new program the encouragement to which it may be entitled. But you come along and identify an area such as the area that has been identified by the Economic Opportunity Act, you bring into being a new agency, and you say to those that are in that agency "the funds that are made available to you are being made available to you for the purpose of developing new, experimental, innovative programs designed to serve this particular segment of society," and you obviously have created a climate that is conducive to trying out new ideas to see if society can be of greater service to this particular segment of the population in terms of giving them new opportunity to achieve their highest possibilities.

But there isn't any question that the older an agency gets the more circumscribed it gets, and the time will come when it will probably make good sense to break up the Office of Economic Opportunity and put some of its well established programs into old line agencies. Now I say well established programs, because if they're well established, then the pressure will be on the old line agencies to keep those programs moving. So probably after you've gone through the process sometime in the future of breaking up and distributing some of its well established programs to other agencies, we should then think about bringing another brand new agency into being, if we're going to continue getting innovation and experimentation, just as the O.E.O has more opportunity than an old line agency, such as the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. But five years from now that new agency will be an old agency, and it will be up against what some of the older schools and colleges are up against at the present time. I come back to the fact that I personally believe that for the time being, I guess I mean by that, the next three to five years, the O.E.O. should be left essentially intact, and should be the lead agency in carrying forth this war against poverty. This is a phrase that isn't as popular as it was in the beginning but I still think it carries with it a meaning. And it seems to me that those of us who are interested in the maximum number of innovative, experimental projects undertaken in order to open up new opportunities for people to achieve their highest possibilities should support the continuance of O.E.O.

May I again say that I'm delighted that I was provided with the opportunity of coming and meeting with you. I think you're engaged in the most exciting program that certainly our country has tackled in my lifetime. I not only congratulate you but I express appreciation to you for being willing to be involved with all of the frustrations involved, with the constant feeling of insecurity, and so on. I know all of these go along with it. But we're indebted to you for what you're doing for this country in giving some people an opportunity to move in the direction of achieving their highest possibility, who if it were not for you, would not have this opportunity.

Summary of an Address By Clifford Norris

Migrant Education, State Dept. of Ed., Oregon

THE MIGRANT AMENDMENT

Mr. Norris discussed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as it has affected the education of migrant children in the state of Oregon. The deficiencies of Title I where migrant children are concerned became apparent after a year's operation because local allocations of funds was made to districts having disadvantaged children on the basis of resident population which, of course, did not include the migrant families. Under the Migrant Amendment each state having a migrant population is entitled to apply for funds in proportion to its estimated number of regular full-time equivalents of migrant child residency in the state.

The Title I Amendment is now working out satisfactorily. Each State Department of Education is required to write and administer its own plan of migrant child education and must include cooperative agreements with other states having populations of migrant children. Toward this end Mr. Norris described a technique that he and other members of the interstate cooperative project have developed to give each migrant child an educational identity. "In the past," to quote Mr. Norris, "the big problem with migrant children is that we have known so little about them. They have gone from place to place and education and health-wise, their past is a blank." The program of interstate exchange of information now being adopted by more and more states employs a system of record keeping that insures the maintenance of a permanent record for each child on file in his home base state which will include complete and up to date information in education and medical history regardless of the location where these may have been acquired. Mr. Norris cited the typical case of a 16 year old still in the third grade who had been in countless schools over the previous ten years but whose recorded attendance for this period amounted to a total of only 280 days. "There are over 200,000 of these migrant children throughout the United States who need an educational system that will meet their particular needs and if we don't give it to them I don't know where else they will get it. They must be gotten into school and, once in, to benefit from a program that will do them some good while they are there."

Summary of an Address By Robert Walter

Deputy Director, California Office OEO

The Migrant Master Plan was developed and put into effect in response to the two most urgent needs of migrants as identified by a Senate Labor subcommittee—wages and housing. The elimination of the bracero program in 1964 gave added impetus to the Master Plan. Improvement of living conditions for the migrant labor force which quickly moved into the vacuum created when the braceros left became the Master Plan's principal objective. California does not trail other states from the standpoint of wage levels paid its agricultural workers so the greatest emphasis of its program has been to try to provide decent housing on a six months a year basis for migrants who would otherwise live in shacks and automobiles. Nineteen camps serving 5,000 migrants have already been completed. Another seven are planned or under construction. Surveys have shown that because of these camps many families are returning and staying for longer periods of time because they have a good place to live.

Mr. Walters attributed success of the plan to four basic cooperating elements:

1. Local agencies, primarily county housing authorities and Community Action agencies which share the responsibility for organizing and directing camps.

2. The state Office of Economic Opportunity which acts as the prime contractor and supervises the disbursement of Federal funds.

3. Local applications advisory board consisting of a representative of the rural housing authority, a member of a local governing body, a grower, a migrant and a representative of the public at large. This board makes decisions on camp locations and assigns priorities in the program.

4. The migrants camp counselors are selected from migrants and questions of camp activities are referred to the migrant people living in camps for their ideas and opinions.

Summary of an Address By Dr. Arthur Pearl

Director, Upward Bound, Eugene, Oregon

Let me start with a quote that Harry Hopkins made in the early New Deal days. I think it has some relevance with some of the things you have been talking about today and that is poverty is not debatable. People don't eat on the long haul—they eat day by day and unless we begin to deal with a poverty program with that understanding, we are nothing but the enemy.

I am supposed to talk about the psychology of poverty. I am not going to talk about that. Everybody knows what that is: It is hell to be poor, it is just that simple. I want to talk about the psychology of poverty workers because that is the problem, the people who are involved with trying to do something about poverty, because that is where the problem is. The problem is in the inability of people who are taking tax dollars to do something about the job and are not doing anything about the job.

And let us also try to understand without having to ask the people at Cal Extension whether or not there is going to be many more people in the migrant stream in the future. There isn't. That isn't hard to figure out. You talked about people dropping out of the migrant stream and becoming more permanent occupants of California, central Oregon, central Idaho and Texas. The stream is drying up. They have no choice, 1,200,000 jobs have been eliminated in agriculture in the last six years. Another million jobs are going to be eliminated in the next ten years. Now that is reality. Those jobs are gone. Fifty percent of all tomatoes in California last year were picked by machine, almost all of the cotton. It wasn't so long ago when I was working on the dock and people were lining up in West Oakland to go out to the fields to pick cotton. You don't do that anymore. A machine does it. Taylor Wine Company this year has come up with a grape picking machine and they can pick New York grapes and they can pick California grapes. There is not going to be a need for bean pickers in this state within ten years. Now that is reality and you deal with that reality, or you get out of the game. And the only answer to migrant workers right now that we offer is for them to be migrant nonworkers or nonmigrant nonworkers. That is the alternative we offer them and those are lousy alternatives. We had better begin to deal with other kinds of alternatives. The most important thing about being poor and the most devastating thing about being poor in the psychology of being poor is that you don't have a choice about your condition. You can't do anything about it. It is the lack of choice, more than anything else, that makes the difference in the psychology of being poor. I don't care what you are, what kind of person you are. If you lack choice, your operation is severely limited. I don't care who you are, whether you are rich, poor, or otherwise. And we had better deal in the reality of the fact that not only is unskilled labor drying up in farm and agriculture but it is also drying up in product producing and services back in the urban centers. We had better begin to deal with that problem. We had better begin to recognize that the essence of problem resolution is job creation, with getting money into the hands of the poor people so they can have some choce.

Without occupational choice, you have no other choice. You can't determine where your kids will go to school, you can't determine where you are going to live, you can't determine whether or not you will go on vacations, you can't determine any other part of your existence without occupational choice. And occupational choice is declining, not increasing. Contrary to what some people will make you believe, the situation in this country for poor people is getting worse, not better. And worse every year, not better, because we are not tending to that kind of situation. Use any kind of index and it is clear. Take one group of poor people, Negro poor in this country. The difference in median income between Negro and white in 1939 was $600. Now it is over $4000 and every year it gets greater. Why? Because occupational choice continues to decline for limited educated people. Right now we have established a system where either you have to have an effective sponsor or you have to have a credential. Poor people have neither.

There is a kind of crazy mentality that somehow or other says that if a person really tries, he can escape poverty. That is baloney. That can't happen. That is the kind

of psychology we have got to deal with. That somehow or other the reason people are poor is because it is their fault.

The reason the poor are poor is because they have no other alternatives. And the kinds of alternatives that people talked about years ago no longer exist.

Let's talk about the liberal psychology. But that is just about as bad as the conservative psychology. The liberal psychology is that what these poor people need is more of us. And I suspect poor people need more of us like Custer needed more Indians. And I would also allow that Custer died for our sins. The real reason why the poor are poor is because they haven't had the benefits of a middle class culture, education, and all that kind of stuff. And what we really need to do is open up that poverty program for increased health, education and welfare services to the poor. The whole approach of nice guys like us is let's take these poor people out of the meat grinder, bandage them up and throw them back into the meat grinder again and expect that it is going to work. But if you go into the meat grinder you are going to get ground up, no matter how much bandaging you have on you. And unless we are prepared to deal with that problem the fact that the schools are irrelevant, that middle class kids are not getting a very good education, we have gone through a whole big deal of what we call dealing with culturally different persons. We have insisted that somehow or other there is a great virtue in being born with money. And there isn't. The whole issue of where do we go now is also to recognize that this liberal solution, the liberal psychology of more service to the poor is as irrational as the conservative solution which is to dump them. They join together in their irrelevance.

What is the logical conclusion? There are certain types of things that we know people are going to be doing. Kinds of things that are obviously going to be occupying us in the future and provide ways out of poverty. What are these obvious ways in which we are going to invest in manpower in the next few years? They are clearly in the human services of health, education and welfare. Here is where we are beginning to get more and more people involved. But, unfortunately, in order to get any way at all involved in those things in any kind of manner, you have got to have that college degree. We have set up a system which is the most discriminatory possible and in order to be able to get a job, you have to get your education first and in order to get that education, you have to have well situated families. And so now we have set up a beautiful system that locks out most of the Negroes, most of the Mexicans, most of the Indians, most of the Appalachian white, almost everyone in the migrant stream because you are not going to get an education in the migrant stream, it is impossible! You are going to have 20 percent more people of school age ten years from now than you have now. It is quite clear that we are going to have more people going to school. We are going to have some reduction of pupil-teacher ratio because we can't get the job done in a highly sophisticated society with as many students per teacher as we now have. So it is not at all impossible that by 1975, rather than the 2½ million teachers we now have, we are going to need from 10, 12 to maybe even 15 million people in teaching roles who are going to get the job done. We are not going to get them. If we are going to require them to be college graduates, and not all of these college graduates can teach so good either. In fact, a lot of them are pretty crummy teachers. There is a lot of potential power in a teaching resource among the migrants. We are not using them. We are not paying them to teach. We set up Operation Headstart. Headstart could be a beautiful program. It could be a means by which we could get a lot of poor people working and doing a decent job. When we do get them working, what do we pay them? A $1.25 an hour for 15 hours a week which guarantees that they will remain poor. Rather than setting up at least an entering wage scale and full time pay, it is above poverty level. Let's start with a $4000 minimum income for everybody who is working on this thing and make it full time and use your professionals part time, they are only moonlighting anyhow. Use them part time and use the people who need the job full time. Now once they are there we have no business leaving them there. They are going to be able to work. Let's operate with the concept that you get your job first and then build into it education and training, so that they can keep moving on up. Let's get our colleges to give them credit for what they learn on the job. And so, in a few years, they can keep moving on up and be able to assume this professional role. Here is a way that you can really make headstart meaningful. Now you make it a way of getting out of poverty and a way of moving into the big fields. The same with health. The unmet health needs in this country, the most advanced in the world, is unbelievable. Look to the future. By 1970 there is going to be one-third more

people over the age of 65 in this country than there were in 1960. If we do even a half-way good job they are going to live longer and we are going to have to give them even more health care. Where are we going to get that staff unless we start drawing upon this resource. We begin to be involved . . . and again with career ladders. We have got to be sure that everybody who gets in isn't locked out of some other level. We've got three ways now when talking about the employment of non-professionals. Most of it and almost all CAP programs and things of that nature operate on the basis of the plantation model. That is, you pay the people a minimal amount of money. We make sure that they have no job security and we don't train them because they might get uppity and that only guarantees that we are going to have more poverty. We have a medical model where we can allow people to have some sort of career development. They can start, you know, as a nurse's aide and then work up to be a registered nurse or they could be a dietician or a physical therapist or things like that, all sort of operating like satellites around the prestigeful doctor. But in order to get that prestigeful recognition, you've got to go through nine years of irrelevancy. But that secures the guilt. That makes sure that it is only for the good people. In that model, you guarantee a lower echelon of people who are never going to get to the top and you guarantee that kind of forced inequality that has got a bunch of the minority down at the bottom who can never move on up.

The third model and the one we have to push for is that you go all the way. Once you start, that top is always there. Our job is to use what resources we have now and to keep that system open. Anything short of that is a disservice to the people. It can be done. There are now funds available under the Scheuer amendments of OEO to make this a possibility. It is possible to insist that this kind of money be made available for community action programs that deal with rural America and to allow people to start with a living wage and move all the way through and to insist that the higher education facilities, the community colleges in particular that are springing up in almost every community, and the state colleges and universities fulfill their obligation and give credits so that people can continue to move. And in doing that, I think we will get people out of poverty. If every penny we spent for which we set up for the poverty program would go not only to the poor people but go to them in such a way that they could see that their security is being taken care of, there is an opportunity for upward mobility. If there was permanence of employment, we wouldn't have the type of problem that we are talking about now, which is not getting better, but worse. We would at least set up some sort of a guideline of how money should be spent. And jobs are not enough. There is nothing so great about a job, particularly if it is a job neither one of us would have. We've got some other kind of warped psychology that argues that there are things out there that are good enough for the poor, but not for us. I was debating once with the head of curriculum for the state of Virginia and he was saying that why couldn't he convince the poor Negro children that there was dignity in human household domestic service. And I said, "That wouldn't be hard. You wouldn't have any trouble convincing them at all, if you will train your kids like that. But if it's not good enough for your kids, don't think it's good enough for anybody elses. And if the job is not a job that you want to have, don't think it is good enough for somebody else." We've got an awful lot of people who think something is good enough for somebody else but they wouldn't do it themselves and there is nothing so hot about a job. If it doesn't move you out of poverty, doesn't allow you to take care of your family, doesn't allow you to get some enjoyment out of life, don't expect people to be eager for it. And so every single program has to be geared to the understanding that you start by getting out of poverty and then you have an opportunity to move on up. And whatever you start with, isn't going to be good enough for them later. People want to move, it is an essence of human nature. When you talk about psychology, none of us are content with our first job. We want to move on out. We want to have some options and there had better be some options there. Given that kind of philosophy we can take the limited amount of money we have now and do something with it. We can begin to talk about what it is really going to take to get us out of poverty. Forty to fifty billion dollars a year. More. And don't think that that is a lot of money. By 1970 we are going to have a trillion dollar a year Gross National Product. A few billion dollars is not a lot of money. But the essence of whether you think this is a lot of money, is what you are getting back for your tax dollar. That is the way to evaluate what you are getting. If you are getting more money to the poor people, you are going to get more tax dollars back. That's not hard to figure out. If we could get every person who is now a tax eater to become a tax payer, it would reduce the amount of cost for each person. And we can get a lot

more government for a lot less individual cost. You aren't going to solve any of your state problems by reducing the number of people who can pay taxes. You are going to solve your problems by increasing the number who can pay taxes and you can get a lot more. Secondly, is it what you are paying your taxes for? If we are paying our taxes to increase the health, education and welfare, conservation and recreational benefits for all men, we are getting something for our money. If all we are getting from our tax money is building new prisons, hiring more policemen, hiring more welfare investigators to find that chiseler, it's a bad deal. And I want you to know, there have been some very good studies on this. It costs you about ten times as much of your tax dollar to catch a chiseler than it does to pay him. It is a very expensive tax proposition to try to find a chiseler.

We have got to find a creative alternative to prisons, to welfare and to crime by allowing these populations to be involved, and to contribute to health, education and conservation.

Since Harold Ickes was on the Roosevelt cabinet over 30 years ago, some things have become pretty critical. I think everybody here, even the most limited of us, will grant that it takes air and water to survive, even the rich need air. And that one of the problems we are facing, even in a less populous state like Oregon, with very few people, there is a critical problem with air and water.

If we consider by the year 2000 when there will be about 312 million people living in this country and 240 million of them will be living on one percent of the land. If we don't begin to utilize tax money to do something about our air and water conservation, that population is going to kill itself off wth its own exhaust. And so when we talk about tax expenditures there, we are talking about something that is critical for all of our survival, not just for poor people. I wish we didn't have a poverty program and could talk about the needs of all of us. And the wasted resources that came from people who could contribute but who we just lock out and don't let them. The one thing that the poor people of this country, when I talk about psychology, don't want is a handout, particularly an inadequate one. The one thing they do want is a chance to make a contribution. And so as long as we lock them out, we all suffer. It is extremely costly in taxes. It is extremely costly in the waste of human resources. It is extremely costly because we are not solving now the problems of rural communties, urban communities, health, education, welfare, recreation or conservation. Until we begin to recognize the most important resources we have are the human beings we are now misusing, we are not going to make much progress. I suspect that I have talked longer than you wanted to hear me but thank you very much.

Summary of an Address By Lauro Garcia

Director, Guadalupe Organization, Inc., Guadalupe, Arizona

MIGRANT PROGRAMS OF THE SOUTHWEST

Members of the conference were challenged by Mr. Garcia concerning the sincerity of interest and dedication assumed to be the motivating force of anti-poverty workers in the cause of the migrant farm worker. "How many," he asked, "of the do-gooders, liberators and educators who attend conferences like this one would be here if they were less well paid." A test of our ability to communicate with the people we are trying to help is our willingness to get away from our desks and out into the fields where the workers are. Find them and minimize the paper work and memorandums that can act as effective barriers between us.

The intensely farmed area a short fifteen miles from Arizona's capitol buildings lies near the center of one of the nations leading counties in terms of volume of agricultural production. Here live some 6,000 people, mostly Yaki Indians and Mexican-Americans, who depend on the crops for their living. Fifty-seven per cent earn less than $3,000 and 75 per cent earn less than $4,000 annually. The education median is 4½ years. In the years from 1910 to the present 53 high school graduates can be accounted for and 28 of these were graduated this year! In 1965 Maricopas gross farm product exceeded the previous year by 49 million, yet wages remained approximately where they had been in 1940 and 1941. Mechanical cotton pickers now harvest 35-40 acres a day, 2,400-3,000 lbs. per acre but hourly rates for the operators of these machines are 90 cents to $1.00. One dollar and twenty-five cents is top wage. Yet the cotton picker is not the only threat to the field hand. Fifteen thousand man-months of seasonal farm labor used in the citrus harvest will soon be idled with the introduction of a new citrus picking machine recently demonstrated. Broccoli, onions, sweet potatoes, lemons, table beets, tomatoes, lettuce, peaches, cherries, apricots and apples which have long defied mechanization, will probably succumb this year or next.

With on-rushing automation eliminating the need for whole contingents of farm workers, the Guadalupe Organization has set about to help its people and prepare them for this new era.

Accomplishments to date include:

1. Obtaining a new voting precinct so that poor people no longer have to travel 3½ miles to vote. Of 95 precincts in Maricopa County, Guadalupe was 92nd. A house to house campaign raised our registered voters to 715, of which 83 per cent voted last year.

2. Construction of 12 new permanent classrooms and three portable classrooms and a library.

3. Health clinics were increased from one or two per month to seven per month.

4. More adults have earned General Equivalency Diplomas than there were high school graduates in all the years since 1910.

5. Etablishment of a credit union that to date has issued more than 400 loans.

6. The service center benefits 700 to 900 people monthly with such services as surplus commodities distribution, drivers' license classes, job placements, letter writing, transportation and welfare interviews.

This work was begun in 1965 on a modest grant of $57,000. With the continued perseverance of really dedicated workers, greater program involvement of the poor and wider community participation our best goals can be realized.

Summary of an Address By Alex Mercure

Director, Home Education Livelihood Program, Albuquerque, New Mexico

MIGRANT PROBLEMS OF THE SOUTHWEST

Mr. Mercure opened his address with a general reference to the War on Poverty, and explained that he would focus his attention in his speech on the migrant problem in New Mexico. He pointed out that the migrant and seasonal farm worker is "at the very, very bottom of the scale," adding:

> He is worse off with his $1200 a year income than the welfare client, because in our state the welfare client can potentially make more money and has more stability of income than the farm worker. The welfare client is guaranteed that his children will be taken care of. School lunches are provided for him because being a welfare client he automatically qualifies. But if a farm worker father in a given month happens to earn a little more money than he normally does, his children get wiped out of the lunch program.

Mr. Mercure criticized the opinion that all the poor have to do is lift themselves up by their bootstraps as being unrealistic. He discussed the importance of New Mexico as the home base state for thousands of migrants who work seasonally in Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast states, and pointed out that migrant youngsters in this state have missed school almost every September, October, and May. He deplored the fact that New Mexico, whose constitution requires bi-lingual education in its schools, provided no special educational programs for Spanish-speaking migrant children until passage of the Economic Opportunity Act. He characterized the pre-EDA educational system for some 2 percent Spanish-speaking and 10 percent Indian-American children as an imposition of a cultural value system which was foreign to a great many of the people of the State of New Mexico.

Of the welfare system in the state he said:

> Every dollar of welfare money that deprives a family of its dignity is costing society in terms of the economic productivity of its people, and it's costing society in terms of the people's own dignity who are supposed to be served by welfare. We must find better solutions to the economic and human problems of people.

With great personal feeling Mr. Mercure spoke of the current unrest in New Mexcio resulting in the siege by neglected farm workers of the courthouse in Tierra Amarilla, the taking of hostages, and violence, actual and threatened. He deplored the conditions in society that impel some people to resort to riot in order to attract attention to their human problems. Pointing out that the migrants and seasonal farm workers of New Mexico have been deprived of government services available to others, Mr. Mercure said:

> Yesterday, we were at a meeting in San Antonio with some small farmers and one of the questions posed by the Department of Agriculture people was: "Has the extension agent ever been to your house?" Both farmers said never. They asked if a home demonstration agent had ever been to your house? And they said never. Now mind you, I think the extension service was created in 1919. They were asked: "Did you know that you could get assistance to organize co-operative market production facilities for the crops that you could grow on your land?" One of them said, "Yes, we found out two weeks ago when we had a meeting at the Home Education Livelihood Program Community Center."

Proceeding with a discussion of automation in cotton and alfalfa production, Mr. Mercure said:

> If a farm worker union were to be organized, Uncle Sam, our tax money, would be the prime strike breaker. The farmer has access to F.H.A., but our farm worker very seldom knows that F.H.A. exists. The farmer could borrow the money to put in an automated irrigation system, to buy the fancy machines that produce alfalfa cubes, so that he could harvest that alfalfa without a single fin-

ger or human hand touching that alfalfa, from the time that it starts growing until it reaches the belly of that cow.

Emphasizing the need to become involved in the promotion of institutional change, Mr. Mercure added:

> This can only be done by mobilizing the resources of the people. We must build a coalition, we must find our friends, we must take the time to meet with our legislators and tell them what is reuired to make that tax eating public to become part of the tax paying public.

As an example of cooperative efforts by farm worker, government agencies, and legislators, Mr. Mercure cited the newly adopted minimum wage law covering farm worker for the first time in the state's history.

Mr. Mercure discussed the need for dialogue and exchange of ideas between migrant programs in the various states in order to promote regional effectiveness. He urged conference participants to help build bridges between those people who are left out of existing social and educational programs and those agencies and resources that do exist. Mr. Mercure warned, however, that we must help the *farm worker* to build bridges in order to avoid the dependency relationships created by welfare programs of the 1930's. He went on to ask:

> Why isn't it possible to provide the poor with the many benefits that our professional classes have today? I know that many of you who have been teachers, have received N.D.E.A. fellowships to go to school at $75.00 a week, with $15.00 for each dependent. Yet we hear complaints because some poverty programs are paying poor people to go to school. Don't we hear that? I say that this is an investment in the human race that is undeveloped today and we should not say we are paying people to go to school. Rather, we should say we are providing fellowships for the poor.

Mr. Mercure described in detail the present programs of the Home Education Livelihood Program, saying that they provide a "basis upon which literacy can develop through some formal instruction, through acquisition of some pre-vocational skills which can be used even after a brief instructional period and through what is called 'Community Life Education'."

He criticized some old-line agencies for failing to provide services and programs for the poor before passage of the Economic Opportunity Act, and also questioned the trend toward spin-off of OEO programs to other agencies. Mr. Mercure concluded by emphasizing the need to equip the seasonal farm workers to take advantage of whatever economic resources seem to be developing in our communities.

Discussion Groups

In the afternoon of the second day, delegates divided into two groups to consider issues of basic importance in administration and program development.

I. Excerpts from the dialogue of project directors who considered the topic, "Building a Constructive Board — Staff Relationship."

COMMENT:

It isn't necessarily so important what the board's responsibility is and what the staff's responsibility is but it is understanding one another—who is going to do what—so to speak. This can only come about by a training program. Training starts with the board and the executive director and the central staff so that they themselves are trained to distinguish between policies and administrative procedures.

COMMENT:

Board members will participate in the board meetings depending on how involved they are permitted to be in program planning. We have advisory committees in each area of recipient people who are involved in looking at local implementation of the program. These board members are now coming to meetings with some constructive ideas about the program.

COMMENT:

In California we have the services of a University of California extension program called Western Center for Community Education and Development. Their consultants are trained in communication skills. They conduct training programs for OEO funded projects so they do much of the conultant work for us. They use group dynamics where there is no agenda set up for programs. We use small groups and large groups. Meetings are held with the board and staff doing vertical training. We break up into small groups of four or five people—never more than seven to a group and we discuss—Why am I here? Why do I feel I am on this board? What do I think is my job as a board member? You'd be surprised—everybody on the board and on the staff has a different idea. Some think they are there to run the show, like watch the director, watch the money. Then you go back to the large groups and discuss the difference in opinions which is a revelation to the board. Then you return to the small groups again and then focus down on the problem of what is the board's responsibility. Out of this process method you build a very strong board-staff relationship.

QUESTION:

How do you explain the purpose of the committees to the recipient members so they will want to serve on the committee?

COMMENT:

It is not important that you explain it—I think it is important that they explain it to themselves. They develop their own rules.
If we don't trust the recipient board member he will not trust us and if he doesn't trust us he will not take part in our organization. If he doesn't trust us, it will only be our organization and not his.

QUESTION:

Do you find the power structure people would be patient with the low income people in letting them work it out?

COMMENT:

We find they are not, therefore, we separate them into two groups. We work with the low income people in group process until they feel confident enough to talk about their needs and what they want to have done.

COMMENT:

I think it is essential in any project, that there should be provisions and funds for

training—not only for teachers or teacher aides and lowest paid persons but also the entire board.

II. Summary of points discussed by program personnel on the topic, "Participation of the Poor in Migrant Programs"

A. Leadership of migrant programs should be selected by the farm workers themselves so that program development for the farm workers should come from their own leadership.

B. The group discussed effective ways to develop grass roots participation and program planning, including techniques to be used in house meetings.

C. The importance of being consistent in our approach to farm workers in a given community was cited.

D. Techniques of preliminary program organization were discussed such as small group participation, taking surveys of what the people want, and including them in program staff positions.

E. This group also stresses the need for including the community at large in migrant programs with schools, volunteer organizations, and local governmental bodies taking part. Involvement of the community can insure continuance of programs for farm workers in face of cut-backs in federal spending.

F. Stressed strongly the need for involving farm workers in the policy making and administration of migrant programs.

G. Basic education programs should be more than teaching reading and writing, and should stress group dynamics, training in self-help enterprises, and group discussion techniques. They should also teach voting and citizenship rights so as to give farm workers more voice in governmental procedures, such as with lobbying groups whereby their needs would be better heard.

Resolutions

In the final session of the conference the following resolutions were proposed:

1. *Be it resolved,* in order to benefit from the experience and opinions of seasonal farm workers, that more effort should be made to bring farm workers with professional program staff to future migrant conferences sponsored by OEO.

Be it further resolved, in order to make such attendance by farm workers possible, that congress make available funds to pay seasonal farm worker delegates for lost work time at an adequate rate of pay, the cost of transportation to and from the conference, and per diem at the rate paid other conference delegates.

2. *Be it resolved,* that in addition to providing classes in basic education, G.E.D. preparation, and practical skills education, Congress should make more funds available to OEO migrant programs to develop leadership training programs for farm workers so that they can assume more important roles in administration of migrant programs and a more active part in community affairs.

Be it further resolved, that more adequate stipends for farm workers be added to all educational and vocational training programs.

3. *Be it resolved,* that in every seasonal farm worker project there should be provision and funds for training not only members of staff but also such members of the board as may be willing and interested in this means of becoming more knowledgeable and effective participants in the program.

4. *Be it resolved,* that inasmuch as there is a continuing need for improved co-ordination and information of program developments between projects concerned with migrants and seasonal farm workers, it is recommended that a central apparatus be created to receive, edit, publish, and redistribute in newsletter form items of current interest and program significance for the mutual benefit of all contributors.

5. *Be it resolved,* that a system of recording and maintaining the educational progress of adult migrants be developed in order to insure continuity of training and instruction and facilitate the transference of these credits between areas and programs.

6. *Be it resolved,* that federal legislation be enacted to provide guarantees of minimum housing and sanitation for migratory workers.

7. *Be it resolved,* that regional or area conferences be held every six months to unite and co-ordinate our efforts to better the conditions of seasonal farm workers.

8. *Be it resolved,* that the Western Migrant Conference go on record endorsing the efforts of the National Campaign for Agricultural Democracy to bring all farm workers under coverage of the National Labor Relations Act.

9. *Be it resolved,* that the elimination of poverty involves the "humanization of our society" and as this is only possible through a vastly expanded program in the development of human resources, more funds must be made available to promote and develop human skills, talents and abilities wherever they may be found and by whomever they are possessed in order that the enriched status of our society may extend to all its citizens.

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